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CONGRESSMAN ROBERT W. NEY PLEADS GUILTY TO CHARGES INVOLVING CORRUPTION AND FALSE STATEMENTS

WASHINGTON – Congressman Robert W. Ney has pleaded guilty to a two-count information charging him with conspiracy to commit multiple offenses – including honest services fraud, making false statements, and violations of his former chief of staff’s one-year lobbying ban – and with making false statements to the U.S. House of Representatives, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division announced today.

Ney, 52, entered his plea today in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, before Judge Ellen Segal Huvelle. Judge Huvelle set Ney’s sentencing for January 19, 2007. Ney faces up to 10 years in prison, a fine of \$500,000, and supervised release following his incarceration. The plea agreement Ney signed last month calls for the government to recommend a sentence of 27 months in prison.

The named co-conspirators in the charges Ney pleaded guilty to today include Jack Abramoff, Michael Scanlon, Tony Rudy, and Ney’s former chief of staff Neil Volz. All have previously pleaded guilty in this investigation and are cooperating with law enforcement officials.

Ney was a Congressman representing the 18th District of Ohio from 1995 through the present. In 2001, Ney became chairman of the House Committee on Administration, a position Ney held until January 2006. Ney admitted that he engaged in a conspiracy beginning in approximately 2000 and continuing through April 2004, wherein he corruptly solicited and accepted a stream of things of value from Abramoff, his lobbyists, and a foreign businessman, in exchange for agreeing to take and taking official action to benefit Abramoff, his clients, and the foreign businessman.

“Congressman Ney betrayed the trust of the constituents he was elected to represent by trading the power and influence of his office for gambling chips, luxury travel, and thousands of dollars of meals, drinks and tickets,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “Congressman Ney’s guilty plea demonstrates that our justice system will hold officials accountable for their illegal acts. We will continue our aggressive pursuit of public corruption crimes to ensure the integrity of our public officials and to help maintain the public’s confidence in our government.”

“Congressional corruption outlined in Congressman Ney’s plea agreement has real life consequences. It undermines the rule of law and erodes the confidence the community must

have in our elected officials,” said Assistant Director Chip Burrus, FBI Criminal Investigative Division. “The FBI and our partners at the Department of Interior-Office of the Inspector General (OIG), General Services Administration-OIG and the Internal Revenue Service, have dedicated our organizational lives to drawing a bright red line that crooks cloaked in government authority should not cross.”

Specifically, Ney admitted that he corruptly solicited and accepted things of value from Abramoff and his lobbyists, with the intent to be influenced and induced to take official actions, including international and domestic trips, meals and drinks, concert and sporting tickets and tens of thousands of dollars of campaign contributions and in-kind contributions such as free fundraisers. Ney admitted that the actions he agreed to take, and took, to benefit Abramoff, his lobbyists and their clients included the support or opposition of legislation at Abramoff’s request, the insertion of statements into the Congressional Record at Scanlon’s request, and the support for an application of a license for a contract to install wireless telephone infrastructure in the House of Representatives.

Ney also admitted that he accepted tens of thousands of dollars worth of gambling chips from a foreign businessman who was hoping to sell U.S.-made airplanes and airplane parts in a foreign country. Ney agreed to help the businessman with obtaining an exemption to the U.S. laws prohibiting the sale of these goods to the foreign country, and with obtaining a visa to travel to the United States. Ney also admitted conspiring to aid and abet violations of the federal one-year lobbying ban by his former chief of staff, Neil Volz.

The Ney case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Mary K. Butler, M. Kendall Day, and James A. Crowell IV of the Public Integrity Section. The case is being investigated by a task force of federal agents including Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of the Interior Office of the Inspector General, the General Services Administration Office of the Inspector General, the Criminal Investigation branch of the Internal Revenue Service.

The broader investigation into the lobbying activities of Jack Abramoff is being conducted by federal agents from the above-named agencies as well as prosecutors in the Public Integrity and Fraud Sections of the Criminal Division and prosecutors in the Criminal Tax Section of the Tax Division. The investigation has received assistance from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida. To date, the investigation has yielded guilty pleas from six defendants, including public officials such as Ney, Volz, former Congressional deputy chief of staff Tony Rudy, and former Department of Interior employee Roger Stillwell. The investigation has also resulted in the conviction by jury trial of the former chief of staff for the General Services Administration, David Safavian. Sentencing for Safavian is scheduled for Oct. 27, 2006, before U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman in Washington, D.C.

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